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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2291  
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S2000000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

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[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 7387

**DECAPIED**

E.O. 12065 XDS-1 9-5-99 (CHAPLIN, MAXWELL) OR-M  
TAGS SHUM, AR  
SUBJECT [REDACTED] CLANDESTINE PRISONS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6707

1. [REDACTED] ENTIRE TEXT)

2. THE FRENCH EMBASSY HAS CONFIDED TO US THAT IT HAS  
INFORMATION SUGGESTING THAT AS RECENTLY AS JULY 1979,  
A PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN DETENTION CENTER EXISTED IN  
SOUTHWESTERN ARGENTINA. THE ALLEGED CAMP IS LOCATED  
IN RIO NEGRO PROVINCE BETWEEN THE TOWNS OF GENERAL ROCA  
AND ALLEN. IF THE FRENCH INFORMATION IS ACCURATE THE  
CAMP IN JULY HELD ABOUT 400 PRISONERS, MOST OF THEM  
CHILEAN, BUT, ALSO REPORTEDLY, POSSIBLY INCLUDING THE  
TWO LONG MISSING FRENCH NUNS.

3. THE FRENCH INFORMATION IS NOT BASED DIRECTLY ON SOURCES WHO  
HAVE BEEN IN THE ALLEGED CAMP. RATHER THE SOURCES  
ARE SECONDARY, IE  
A. AN EMPLOYEE OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION WHO  
HAS APPARENTLY DEBRIEFED CHILEANS WHO HAVE BEEN FREED  
AFTER SERVING IN THE CAMP.

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3. A CHILEAN PRIEST WHO IN THE COURSE OF INVESTIGATING  
THE MARCH 1979 DISAPPEARANCE IN ARGENTINA OF A FELLOW PRIEST,

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JULIO SAN CRISTOBAL, LEARNED OF THE CAMP'S EXISTENCE.

C. A PRIEST IN SANTIAGO WHO WAS GIVEN A LETTER ALLEGEDLY WRITTEN BY TWO INMATES OF THE CAMP-LUIS VARAS AND ROSA DE C. AYALA-AND CARRIED TO HIM BY A PEDRO REYES GONZALEZ. REYES SAID HE SERVED TIME IN THE CAMP HIMSELF PRIOR TO BEING EXPELLED FROM ARGENTINA IN JULY OF THOS YEAR. THE LETTER ALLEGED THAT THERE WERE ABOUT 400 PEOPLE IN THE CAMP INCLUDING "TWO FRENCH NUNS." THE INDIVIDUAL WHO CARRIED THE LETTER IS DESCRIBED BY THIS SOURCE AS UNSTABLE AND CONFUSED. MOREOVER THERE CONTRADICTIONS IN HIS STORY. HOWEVER HE DID SEEM TO KNOW JULIO SAN CRISTOBAL, WHO HE SAYS HE MET IN THE CAMP.

4. COMMENT: WE KNOW THAT MANY CHILEANS WERE DETAINED IN NEUQUEN PROVINCE DURING THE BEAGLE CRISIS LAST YEAR. THESE DETENTIONS WERE DENOUNCED BY THE BISHOP OF THE PROVINCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE NAMES OF SAN CRISTOBAL, REYES GONZALEZ, VARAS AND AYALA DO NOT APPEAR ANYWHERE IN OUR RECORDS AS HAVING BEEN DETAINED. NOR ARE THEY AMONG THE NAMES LISTED BY ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS. OF COURSE, CHILEANS IN DISTANT PROVINCES WOULD BE AMONG THE LEST LIKELY TO COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE EMBASSY AND LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS.

5. THE FRENCH REPORT IS COMPELLING BUT NOT CONCLUSIVE IT CONSTITUTE'S ONE OF THE MORE TANTALIZING AND DETAILED REPORTS OF A RECENTLY-DESCRIBED CLANDESTINE CAMP WE HAVE RECEIVED. THE FRENCH ARE MOST CONCERNED BECAUSE OF THE ALLEGATION THAT THE TWO MISSING FRENCH NUNS ARE IN THIS CAMP. THEY APPROACHED US TO HELP THEM CONFIRM

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THE EXISTENCE OF THE CAMP ON THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US-WHICH WE COULD NOT DO. THEY ARE EXTREMELY PROTECTIVE OF THE REPORT AND ITS SOURCES, AND FOR THIS REASON WE THINK IT BEST TO LEAVE THE FUTHER INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORT TO THEM. WE NOTE THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY DONE A RATHER THOROUGH SEARCH IN CHILE, AND THE INFORMATION THEY COLLECTED IS REPORTED ABOVE. END COMMENT.

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